MUSLIM DEGENERATION AND ITS ONLY REMEDY

(Revised and Improved Translation)

OF

Urdu Book:–
Musalmano-Ki-Maujoodah
Pasti-ka-Wahid Ilaaj.

مسلمانوں کی موجودہ پستی کا واحد علاج

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Translated by
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نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي وَنُسَلِّمُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

For the high devotion, keenness and perseverance of Hadhrat Mohammad Ilyas (Rahmat-Allah-Alaihi) and also due to the profound zeal shown by many other learned and pious personages among Muslims, a cohesive work is currently in progress for the propagation of Islam and the Islamic way of life. This fact is known to most of the well-informed Muslims of this period. Although an unworthy being for the high mission, I have been commanded by the distinguished gentlemen referred to above to write an account of this work, so as to bring out clearly the special features of propagation *(Tabligh)* and also to highlight the burning need for this, the Supreme Islamic activity, at this critical juncture, so that, as many Muslims as possible are able to understand and benefit from what is going on.

In obedience to their command, I have ventured to gather in this booklet a few thoughts and ideas, which are mere drops from the ocean of knowledge and enlightenment possessed by the above mentioned personalities. The collection really amounts to a handful of petals from the vast garden of the teachings of Islam, which I have hurriedly picked up for presentation to the readers. There may be mistakes and omissions in the presentation, for which I beg my readers to make allowance, and request them to be so kind as to amend or correct those mistakes if necessary, thereby earning my gratitude.

It is my earnest prayer that may Haq-Ta'ala (Shanahoo) by His special favours and kindnesses, and for the sake of the noble personages connected with this work, forgive me for my sins and not uncover my misdeeds, but He may graciously enable us all to lead a pious and virtuous life. May He bestow upon us the wealth of His own love, and grant us the approval to follow His own chosen faith of Islam. May He also give us the power to propagate Islam in strict obedience and loyalty to His dearest and the most distinguished Prophet, (Hadhrat Mohammad sallallaho alaihe wasallam).

MOHAMMAD EHTESHAM-UL-HASSAN (DELHI)
18 RIBIYYUSANI 1358 (HIJRI)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ وَالصَّلٰوةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلٰى سَيِّدِ الْأَوَّلِيْنَ وَالْآخِرِيْنَ خَاتَمِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلِيْنَ مُحَمَّدٍ وَّآلِهٖ وَأَصْحَابِهِ الطَّيِّبِيْنَ الطَّاهِرِيْنَ.

PAST HISTORY

About thirteen and a half centuries ago, when the world was sunk in the darkness of ignorance, sin and impiety, a light of true knowledge and guidance rose from the horizon of the rugged hills of Batha.* Its rays spread to the East, West, North and South; they reached every corner of the earth and within the short period of 23 years, the way was paved through that light for the mankind to move to such heights of glory as had never been attained before. It enlightened Muslims and created in them the urge for taking the right counsel, which would ultimately bring them their salvation. By following the right path and the guidance emanating from that light, the Muslims moved from success to success and attained the highest pinnacle of glory in history. For centuries, they ruled on this earth with such grandeur and strength that no contemporary power had the courage to challenge them and, if someone dared to do so, he did that at the risk of being annihilated. This is the historical truth, which cannot be erased. But, alas! this fact of history has only become a myth, an ancient tale, to narrate which may sound meaningless and ridiculous, particularly in the context of the present day life of Muslims, which obviously is a blot on the brilliant performance and achievements of their ancestors, the early followers of Islam.

THE DISEASE

The history, even up to the end of the thirteenth century Hijri, will reveal that the Muslims were the sole possessors of honour, dignity, power and grandeur, but when one turns his eyes away from the pages of the history books and looks at the Muslims of today, one sees the picture of a people sunk in misery and disgrace, a people who possess no real strength or power, honour or dignity, brotherhood or mutual love, and reflects no virtues or moral character worth the name. One cannot find any sign in them of those

* Name of hills around Mecca (Saudi Arabia).

noble deeds which at one time used to be the symbol of each and every Muslim. Now-a-days, there can hardly be a living person who can be said to have the purity or the sincerity of conscience. On the contrary, Muslims are sunk in vice and sin. They have wandered away so much from the path of virtue which at one time used to be their "hallmark", that the enemies of Islam talk and discuss their affairs with delight, contempt and ridicule. Unfortunately, the matter does not end here. The Muslim youth of the new generation, which has been affected and influenced by the so-called modern trends or the Western way of life, take pleasure in laughing at the very ideals of Islam and openly criticize the sacred code of "Shariat" as being out of date and impracticable. One wonders at such behaviour and finds that a people, who once gave strength, happiness, honour and peace to the entire mankind, have now become completely demoralised, apathetic, shallow and helpless. Those who had once taught the world the golden lessons of etiquette and culture are today found wanting in these very adornments.

EARLIER ATTEMPTS TOWARDS IMPROVEMENT

For a long time, some distinguished thinkers and preachers of Islam have been seriously pondering over this unfortunate plight of their people and have been striving hard to reform the Muslim society, but alas!

مرض بڑھتا گیا جوں جوں دوا کی

(The treatment only aggravated the disease).

The situation is fast deteriorating and the future looks darker still. Inaction and complacency on our part in these circumstances will be an unforgiveable sin and crime. But, before deciding what is to be done, it will be necessary to look closely at the root cause of this sad state of affairs.

People have assigned several causes to this degeneration and have adopted numerous measures for arresting the rot, but unfortunately all efforts so far have only brought further frustration. Instead of improvement, despair and confusion have resulted, particularly so in the ranks of learned preachers and "ulema". The basic truth of all this is that the root cause of the real disease has not been diagnosed. Until this is done, no proper treatment can be prescribed or administered, hence no cure or improvement

can be expected. Any step lacking proper diagnosis and correct treatment would amount to making a chronic situation more chronic, and further increase confusion and despair.

THE APPROACH

It is the proven claim of Islam that the "Shariat" is the Divine Code, which lays down a complete way of life outlining every possible measure for advancing and progressing on the path of true success and righteousness. It very clearly describes the proper course of action and indicates methods to check and re-orientate in the event of losing direction or going astray. In other words, "Shariat-e-Muhammadiah" assures its followers their spiritual and material well-being and advancement for their whole life in all situations, right up to the last day of life on this earth. Obviously, therefore, it would be futile to look for the cause and the cure for the prevailing degeneration outside the dictates of "Shariat". For this, of necessity, we must look closely into the "Quran-i-Hakim" which is the fountain source of "Shariat" and of all knowledge and guidance for the whole of mankind. In fact, it is the only source of wisdom for man. We ought to seek its help in finding out what our troubles are and how they are to be removed, if we really desire to attain full recovery. Once we come to know about that, we must cling to the solution and solemnly resolve to adopt it. Certainly, the wisdom and guidance from the "Quran" will never fail us, particularly at the critical juncture and in the difficult times through which we are passing nowadays. Let us look and search for the right solution in the "Quran" and "Sunnah".

THE DIAGNOSIS

The Creator of the universe, Allah Ta'ala, remains avowedly committed that the kingdom and His vicegerency on earth are only meant for the true Muslims (momineen).

This is clear from the following verse:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّلِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ (النور ٥٠)

"Allah has promised to those from amongst you who believe and do righteous deeds that He would surely make them His vicegerents on earth."

He has also given the assurances that true believers will always dominate over non-believers and that non-believers will be left without any friend or ally; as is clear from the following verse:

وَلَوْ قَاتَلَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوَلَّوُا الْأَدْبَارَ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُونَ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا (الفتح ٢٢)

"And if these non-believers had given you a battle, they were sure to turn on their heels, and they would have found no protector and no helper."

Moreover, it is Allah Ta'ala's own obligation to grant every help to the true Muslims and it is also His promise that such people will always remain exalted and glorious. This is borne out by the following verses:

وَكَانَ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نَصْرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (الروم ٤٧)

وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمُ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ (آل عمران ١٣٩)

وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ (المنافقون ٨)

"And it is our bounden duty to render succour to the true believers."

"And do not give way to despair, and do not grieve, and you only shall dominate, if you are true believers."

"And honour is only for Allah, His Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) and those who believe."

The above Divine assertions clearly indicate that the way to regain honour, grandeur, exaltation, glory and virtues by Muslims, lies only in their being strictly faithful. If their relationship with Allah Ta'ala and the Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) is strong and firm, they are destined to be masters of each and every things on this Earth. But if, on from the following verse:

وَالْعَصْرِ ، إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ، إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ (العصر ١ - ٣)

"And let Time be witness: verily man is in a great loss except, of course, those who believe and do righteous deeds and who rejoin truth and enjoin patience."

As already brought out, history proves that the early Muslims had been able to reach the highest summit of

honour and glory, whereas the present day Muslims seem to have moved in the opposite direction. It is obvious from the above verses of the Quran that the first Muslims had attained that high position in life because of the purity and strength of their faith and the excellence of their character. Conversely, the deplorable condition of the present-day Muslims is the result of weakness in their faith and character, the opposite of what their forefathers possessed. Therefore, it will be right to say that today we are Muslims in name only! In this connection, the true Messenger of Allah Ta'ala Hadhrat Mohammad, (sallallaho alaihe wasallam), had prophesied:

سَيَأْتِي عَلَى النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ لَا يَبْقَى مِنَ الْإِسْلَامِ إِلَّا إِسْمُهُ وَلَا مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ إِلَّا رَسْمُهُ (مشكوة)

"An era will come in the near future when Islam will exist merely in name and Quran will exist merely in phrase."

This is clearly applicable to the Muslims of the present time. In these circumstances, the points which need urgent investigation are:

(a) as the right type of faith, which can have the approval of Allah Ta'ala and His Apostle and which will bring us spiritual and material advancement, is not to be seen anywhere, what will be the means of acquiring that true faith; and

(b) what are the factors which have caused the extinction of that faith, and with it the true life of Islam, from our midst?

A study of the Holy Quran clearly reveals that the capacity to maintain the required level of the true faith of Islam, and the ultimate ascendance to exaltation and glory through it, are dependent on the fulfilment of a special task which has been so graciously assigned by Allah Ta'ala to the Muslims alone. It is for this that they have been given, in the Quran, the distinguished position, "Khair-ul-Umam" (the best of all peoples).

According to the faith of Islam, the main purpose behind the creation of this world was to establish and prove the Divinity, the Oneness, and the most exalted

existence of Almighty Allah Ta'ala, and to reflect His unlimited Powers and boundless Attributes through man, who was to be guided by the light of true knowledge. It was impossible for man to conceive and utilize that knowledge without his first being purified of impiety and obscenity. Only after that purification, is he to be adorned with fine virtues, excellence of conduct and the eventual capacity to act righteously. It was for this purpose of bringing about this purity and power in the ranks of mankind that thousands of Prophets and Apostles had been deputed by Allah Ta'ala. The last in the series, came the "Sayyed-ul-Ambia wal Mursalin" (the greatest of all the Prophets) Mohammad (sallallaho alaihe wasallam). It was through him that man reached the high state of development of mind and body leading to the final stage of purity. It was then that mankind received the glad tidings in the following verse:

اَلْيَوْمَ اَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِيْنَكُمْ وَاَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي (المائدة ٣)

"And today we have perfected your Religion for you and completed our bounty upon you."

The supreme purpose of man's creation had been fulfilled; good and evil had been clearly defined, a complete system of practical life had been revealed, the lineage of prophethood and apostlehood had been terminated, and lastely, the duties that were formerly discharged exclusively by the Prophets had devolved as a collective mission upon the "Ummat-i-Mohammadia" (the Muslim people). This last fact has been clearly brought out in the following verses of the Holy Quran:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ (آل عمران ١١٠)

"O you (followers of Mohammad): you are the noblest of peoples, in that you have been brought out for (the benefit of) mankind. You enjoin the good and forbid the evil, and you believe in Allah."

وَلْتَكُن مِّنكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنكَرِ
وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ (آل عمران ١٠٤)

"And it is but meet that amongst you there should be a group devoted to inviting people towards righteousness and enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, and it is only those who do this that prosper."

In the first verse, "Allah Ta'ala" has stated the reason why the Muslims are called "Khair-ul-Umam" (noblest of all peoples); it is because of spreading good and preventing evil. In the second verse, He has further clarified that only those people shall be exalted in life who fulfil that injunction. The command does not end here. It is stated in another place that the failure to accomplish this vital task will bring curse and gloom on its assignees. This inference is taken from the following verse:

لُعِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِن بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَىٰ لِسَانِ دَاوُدَ وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ، ذَٰلِكَ
بِمَا عَصَوا وَّكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ، كَانُوا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَن مُّنكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ ، لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا
يَفْعَلُونَ (المائدة ٧٨ - ٧٩)

"And those amongst the people of Israel who rejected Allah's commands were cursed by Allah through the tongues of Dawood and Isa, son of Mariam. And the curse was because they rebelled against Allah's commands and transgressed the limits and did not desist from the evil that they were doing; and verily it was a grievous lapse on their part."

A further explanation and clarification of the above verse of the Holy Quran can be seen from the following "Ahadis" (sayings of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (sallallaho alaihe wasallam).

(1) It has been narrated by Hadhrat Abdullah bin Masud (radi Allaho anho) that the Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) was pleased to say:

(١) وَفِي السنن والمسند من حديث عبد الله بن مسعود قَالَ قَالَ
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِنَّ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ كَانَ إِذَا عَمِلَ الْعَامِلُ فِيهِمْ
بِالْخَطِيئَةِ جَاءَهُ النَّاهِي تَعْزِيرًا ، فَقَالَ يَا هٰذَا إِتَّقِ اللَّهَ ، فَإِذَا كَانَ مِنَ الْغَدِ جَالَسَهُ
وَآكَلَهُ وَشَارَبَهُ كَأَنَّهُ لَمْ يَرَهُ عَلَى خَطِيئَةٍ بِالْأَمْسِ ، فَلَمَّا رَأَى عَزَّ وَجَلَّ ذٰلِكَ مِنْهُمْ
ضَرَبَ قُلُوبَ بَعْضِهِمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ ، ثُمَّ لَعَنَهُمْ عَلَى لِسَانِ نَبِيِّهِمْ دَاوُدَ وَعِيسَى بْنِ
مَرْيَمَ ، ذٰلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ، وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ لَتَأْمُرُنَّ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلَتَنْهَوُنَّ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَلَتَأْخُذُنَّ عَلَى يَدِ السَّفِيهِ وَلَتَأْطُرُنَّ عَلَى الْحَقِّ أَطْرًا
أَوْ لَيَضْرِبَنَّ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَ بَعْضِكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ ثُمَّ يَلْعَنُكُمْ كَمَا لَعَنَهُمْ .

"Amongst peoples gone by, when somebody committed a sin, the other would reprimand him and would say: "Fear Allah"; but on the following day would befriend him and mix with him as if he had never seen him committing the sin. And when Allah saw them behaving thus, He confounded the hearts of some with those of some, and cursed them through the tongues of Dawood and Isa son of Mariam; and this because they rebelled against Allah and transgressed His limits."

I, Mohammad swear by Him, Who has control over my soul: you must enjoin the good and forbid the evil and force the ignorant wrongdoer into the path of rectitude; else Allah will confound your hearts and you will be cursed, as were some of the peoples gone by.

(٢) وفي سنن أبي داود وابن ماجة عَنْ جَرِيرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: مَا مِنْ رَجُلٍ يَكُونُ فِي قَوْمٍ يَعْمَلُ فِيهِمْ
بِالْمَعَاصِي يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى أَنْ يُغَيِّرُوا عَلَيْهِ وَلَا يُغَيِّرُونَ إِلَّا أَصَابَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِعِقَابٍ قَبْلَ
أَنْ يَمُوتُوا

(2) Hadhrat Jareer (radi Allaho anho) has narrated that Hadhrat Mohammad (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) was pleased to say: "When an individual of a community sins, and the community, in spite of its authority over him, does not prevent him from sinning, Allah's punishment descends on them even before death, i.e., He subjects them to various tribulations in this very world."

(٣) وروى الأصبهاني عن أنس أنَّ رَسُولَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: لَا تَزَالُ لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللهُ تَنْفَعُ مَنْ قَالَهَا وَتَرُدُّ عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابَ وَالنَّقْمَةَ مَالَمْ يَسْتَخِفُّوا بِحَقِّهَا ، قَالَ: يَظْهَرُ الْعَمَلُ بِمَعَاصِي اللهِ فَلَا يُنْكَرُ وَلَا يُغَيَّرُ . (ترغيب)

(3) Hadhrat Anas (radi Allaho anho) has narrated that Hadhrat Mohammad (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) was pleased to say, "The Kalimah La ilaha Illallaho always benefits the individuals who proclaim it, and keeps away from them woes and troubles, unless, indeed, its rights are ignored." The companions inquired: "What does the ignoring of its rights mean?" Replied the Prophet: "It means that when sins are being committed openly they do not prevent or stop them."

(٤) عَنْ عَائِشَةَ قَالَتْ: دَخَلَ عَلَيَّ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَعَرَفْتُ فِي وَجْهِهِ أَنْ قَدْ حَضَرَهُ شَيْءٌ ، فَتَوَضَّأَ وَمَا كَلَّمَ أَحَدًا ، فَلَصِقْتُ بِالْحُجْرَةِ أَسْتَمِعُ مَا يَقُولُ ، فَقَعَدَ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ ، فَحَمِدَ اللهَ وَأَثْنَى عَلَيْهِ ، وَقَالَ: يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ اللهَ تَعَالَى يَقُولُ لَكُمْ: مُرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَدْعُوا فَلَا أُجِيبَ لَكُمْ وَتَسْأَلُونِي فَلَا أُعْطِيَكُمْ ، وَتَسْتَنْصِرُونِي فَلَا أَنْصُرَكُمْ ، فَمَا زَادَ عَلَيْهِنَّ حَتَّى نَزَلَ . (ترغيب)

(4) Hadhrat Aisha (radi Allaho anha) says: "The Holy Prophet, (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) came to me and I could read from his noble countenance that something extraordinary had happened. He did not utter a single word but, having performed ablution, repaired straight to the mosque. I, too, stood by the wall of the mosque to hear what he had to say. The Prophet of Allah ascended the pulpit and, after the usual holy exordium, said: 'O people, Allah has ordained you to enjoin the good and forbid the evil, lest a time should come when you call and He may not respond, you ask for a favour and He may not grant it, and you call for help and He may refuse'."

(٥) عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: إِذَا عَظَّمَتْ أُمَّتِي الدُّنْيَا نُزِعَتْ مِنْهَا هَيْبَةُ الْإِسْلَامِ ، وَإِذَا تَرَكَتِ الْأَمْرَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّهْيَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ حُرِمَتْ بَرَكَةَ الْوَحْيِ ، وَإِذَا تَسَابَّتْ أُمَّتِي سَقَطَتْ مِنْ عَيْنِ اللهِ . (كذا في الدر عن الحكيم الترمذي)

(5) Hadhrat Abu Huraira (radi Allaho anho) has narrated:

"Said the Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam): When my "Ummat" (followers) begin to attach more importance to the world and to regard it as a source of glory, the awe and importance of Islam will vanish from their hearts. When they give up the practice of enjoining good and forbidding evil, they will be deprived of the blessings of Revelation, and, when they begin to indulge in mutual recrimination, they will fall low in the eyes of Allah."

THE ROOT-CAUSE

From the above "Ahadis" it is clear, that the abandonment of the act of "Amir bil maruf wa nahi anil munkar" (enjoining the good and forbidding the evil) has usually been the root cause of "Allah Ta'ala's" anger and displeasure and His eventual wrath. And if the "Ummat-e-Mohammadiah" becomes guilty of that neglect and omission, the punishment to be given to them will be more severe than to the earlier people, because they would have failed to recognise their exclusive obligation and neglected to fulfil the sole mission in their life. For this reason, the Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) has enjoined the act of "Amir bil maruf wa nahi anil munkar" (enjoining the good and forbidding the evil) "as the essence and the pivot of the faith of Islam" and the abandonment of that act as the cause of decay and decline of the faith.

In the "Hadis" of Abu Saeed Khudri, (radi Allaho anho) it is mentioned:

مَنْ رَأَى مِنْكُمْ مُنْكَرًا فَلْيُغَيِّرْهُ بِيَدِهِ ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِلِسَانِهِ ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَبِقَلْبِهِ ، وَذٰلِكَ أَضْعَفُ الْإِيمَانِ . (مسلم)

"When anyone of you witnesses the commission of evil, he should use his hands to prevent it; and if he has not the power to do this, he should use his tongue; and if he has not the power to do even this, he should use the power of his heart; and this last represents the weakest degree of faith."

There is yet a clearer version of the same "Hadis" from Ibne Masud (radi Allaho anho):

مَا مِنْ نَبِيٍّ بَعَثَهُ اللّٰهُ قَبْلِي إِلَّا كَانَ لَهُ فِي أُمَّتِهِ حَوَارِيُّونَ وَأَصْحَابٌ يَأْخُذُونَ بِسُنَّتِهِ وَيَقْتَدُونَ بِأَمْرِهِ ، ثُمَّ إِنَّهَا تَخْلُفُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خُلُوفٌ يَقُولُونَ مَالَا يَفْعَلُونَ ، وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَالَا يُؤْمَرُونَ ، فَمَنْ جَاهَدَهُمْ بِيَدِهِ فَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ وَلَيْسَ وَرَاءَ ذٰلِكَ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ حَبَّةُ خَرْدَلٍ . (مسلم)

It is usual for Allah to so arrange that every Prophet leaves behind a group of his companions who perpetuate His message, who follow it rigorously and preserve the holy message exactly in the form in which the Messenger left it. Then comes an epoch of mischief and error, an epoch that witnesses the birth of people who step aside from the path laid down by the Prophet. Their actions are at variance with their proclamations; their activities are not warranted by the holy law. So whosoever arises in defence of Truth and Law, and opposes the miscreants with his hands, is a true believer; he who cannot do this but uses his tongue, is a believer too; and he who cannot, do even this, but uses the power of his heart, is also a believer; but less than this, there is no degree of faith–(*Muslim*).

The vital importance of *Tabligh* (the task of propagation) has been further emphasized by Imam Ghazali, (rahmatullah alaih) in the following manner:

"There can be no doubt that the act of "amr bil maruf wa nahi anil munkar" is that solid pillar of Islam, on which each and every article of faith rests. It is for this very mission that Allah Ta'ala deputed all the Holy Prophets. If unfortunately, it is ignored or forgotten and its methods and practices are given up, one has to say that the very purpose of prophethood is totally defeated and rendered meaningless. Thereafter, the conscience, which is the capital wealth of man, will wither and degenerate. Indolence and dullness of mind will prevail. The highway to vice and arrogance will be opened up and barbarity will spread in the whole world. All achievements of man will become dangerous and even harmful. Human relationship will break down. Civilization will be ruined. Mankind will be reduced to utter moral destitution. But, the vivid realisation of all this will come only on the Day of Judgement, when the entire mankind will be under trial before the Almighty Allah Ta'ala and called upon to account for each and every action."

"Alas! alas! the fear has come true, that which was apprehended is before our eyes.

وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللّٰهِ قَدَرًا مَقْدُورًا ، فَإِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

The tower of knowledge and enlightenment has been demolished and its benefits and effects have been completely wiped out. Consequently, mutual contempt and humiliation are rampant. Nothing, of the sublime relationship between man and his Creator, is left in human hearts; on the contrary, man, like an animal, has become the slave of his passions. Indeed, not only is there a paucity of true Muslims in this world now, but it is practically impossible to meet anyone who is prepared to bear the inevitable privations for the sake of propagating Islam.

"Any Muslim who dares to take steps to remove the present state of ruin and devastation, endeavours to revive the act of propagation and comes forward to shoulder that heavy responsibility, will surely rank as the noblest and the most distinguished being among the whole of mankind."

He said this nearly eight hundred years ago, but his statement is very accurately applicable to us today.

We must ponder and calmly think out what is to be done in these circumstances. There are some well-known causes which seem to be responsible for the apathy and indifference that prevail today. These are discussed below.

CAUSES

FIRST

We generally believe that the act of *Tabligh* is the sole and special responsibility of the "ulema", even when the relevant injunctions of the Quran are clear and squarely apply to each and every living Muslim. The actions and the hard work of the Companions of the Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam), and all those distinguished Muslims who immediately followed them, bear definite testimony to the contention that each and every Muslim is responsible for the propagation of Islam *(Tabligh)*.

To assign the obligation of *Tabligh* (amr bil maruf wa nahi anil munkar) solely to the ranks of "ulema", and not to ourselves, is a sign of grave ignorance on our part. The duty of the "ulema" is to state the truth and to point out the right path. To enforce the righteousness among the people and to keep the people moving on the right path is the responsibility of all other Muslims. The following "Hadis" is a clear exhortation to this:

اَلَا كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ ، فَالْأَمِيرُ الَّذِي عَلَى النَّاسِ رَاعٍ عَلَيْهِمْ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُمْ ، وَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ عَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُمْ ، وَالْمَرْأَةُ رَاعِيَةٌ عَلَى بَيْتِ بَعْلِهَا وَوَلَدِهِ وَهِيَ مَسْئُولَةٌ عَنْهُمْ ، وَالْعَبْدُ رَاعٍ عَلَى مَالِ سَيِّدِهِ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُ ، فَكُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ . (بخاري - مسلم)

"Lo! All of you are leaders and shall be questioned on the Day of Judgment in respect of your trust. So, the king is a head unto his subjects and shall be questioned in respect of them; the husband is a head unto his wife and shall be questioned in respect of her; the wife is a head unto her husband's house and the children, and shall be questioned in respect of them all; the slave is a watchman unto his master's effects and shall be questioned in respect of those. So you are all shepherds, and you shall be questioned in respect of that entrusted to you."

And similarly, in another place, a yet clearer version is given:

قَالَ: أَلدِّينُ النَّصِيحَةُ ، قُلْنَا: لِمَنْ؟ قَالَ: لِلّٰهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِأَئِمَّةِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَعَامَّتِهِمْ . (مسلم)

The Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) said:

"Religion is the act of counselling." (The Companions) enquired: "On whose part (to counsel)?" He said: "On the part of Allah, the Apostle, the leaders of the Muslims and the lay Muslims."

Even if we suppose, as an extreme case, that this task has to be carried out by the "Ulema" only, the present emergency and the critical situation demand that everyone of us should put his shoulder to the wheel and strive hard for the propagation of the "Kalimah" and the protection of the Muslim way of life.

SECOND

It is commonly believed that, if a person is firm and steadfast in his own faith (eeman), the infidelity of others will bring him no harm, because of the meaning attached to the following verse of Holy Quran:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَنْ ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ (المائدة ١٠٥)

"O you who believe! you are responsible for your own souls. He who goes astray cannot harm you, while you are on the path of righteousness."

In fact, the real meaning and sense of the above verse is not what is being apparently attached to it, because, in that case, the meaning would appear to be against the Divine wisdom and spirit and against the teachings of the "Shariat-i-Mohammadiah." It indicates that the collective life and progress and salvation of the Muslim society as a whole are the essence of Islam. The Muslim people must be considered like a single body having several limbs. When any limb receives an injury, the whole body suffers from the pain.

Mankind may progress to any limit and it may reach the highest pinnacle of glory in every sphere of life, yet

there will be some who will go astray and become involved in impiety. In that event, the above verse re-assures the righteous people that as long as they remain steadfast and keep moving on the right path, no harm can be brought to them by those who decide to give up the right way of life.

Yet another point is that full enlightenment will be received only when all the rules of law of "Shariat-i-Mohammadiah" are accepted and practised, including all the Divine commands, which naturally cover "Amir bil maruf wa nahi anil munkar". This interpretation is supported by the following words of Hadhrat Abu Bakr (radi Allaho anho):

عَنْ أَبِي بَكْرٍ الصِّدِّيقِ قَالَ: أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّكُمْ تَقْرَءُونَ هٰذِهِ الْآيَةَ: يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَّنْ ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ ، فَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: إِنَّ النَّاسَ إِذَا رَأَوُا الْمُنْكَرَ فَلَمْ يُغَيِّرُوهُ أَوْشَكَ أَنْ يَعُمَّهُمُ اللّٰهُ بِعِقَابِهِ .

> "O people! you are given to reading this verse: "O you who believe! you are responsible for your own souls; he who goes astray cannot harm you, while you are on the path of righteousness," but I have heard the Apostle of Allah saying that when people see something evil and do not seek to liquidate it, they will soon find themselves encompassed by the wrath of Allah."

The verse in question has been similarly interpreted by all the truly learned personages, such as Imam Nawavi (rahmat-ullah alaih), who explains in his "Sharah Muslim":

> "The consensus of opinion of the learned personages regarding the meaning of his verse is that, "when you have performed the duty enjoined on you, the remissness of those who refuse to profit by your counsel will not harm you," as says Allah Ta'ala:
>
> وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى (فاطر ١٨)
>
> "(No one shall carry another man's burden)"; and of the several injunctions addressed to all, one is that

regarding enforcement of good and prevention of evil. Therefore when an individual has performed this duty, and the addressee proves refractory, the former shall not be penalised for it. He has performed his duty of "amr-o-nahi" and acceptance or rejection of it by the other party is not within his competence. Allah knows best."

THIRD

People of distinction as well as the common man, the learned and the ignorant, all alike, have become indifferent or even averse to the need for the reformation of society. They all seem to have resigned to the fate, that it is difficult, rather impossible these days, for the Muslims to make any progress to regain their lost glory. Whenever any scheme for improvement and reformation is presented to anyone, the usual reaction is: how can the Muslims progress in the circumstances when they have neither a state* of their own nor any power to rule, neither wealth nor any financial standing, no army and equipment of war nor any influence, they lack even in physical stamina, mutual agreement and unity of purpose. Even the religious people seem to have decided by themselves that, it being the fourteenth century "Hijri" and the people, having drifted so farther away from the prophetical teachings, the downfall of Islam and the Muslims is inevitable. They maintain that, in these circumstances, it will be useless to make any effort towards the reformation of Muslims.

It is true that the effects of the apostolic light become less and less as we are removed farther and farther away from it, but this does not mean that no effort is to be made to regenerate that light by enforcing "Shariat" and upholding and defending, with all our energies and power, the way of life taught by Hadhrat Mohammad (sallallaho alaihe wasallam).

For, had the Muslims before us thought so, there would have been no trace of Islam left anywhere by now, because there would have been no means through which the lessons and the teachings of "Shariat" could have reached us. Therefore, it will be fatal for us not to check the

* The original text was written in 1938 when the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent were not free and did not possess independent political power or authority.

present negative attitude towards Islam. We should adopt a vigorously positive line for our own sake and also for the sake of future generations. The time is moving fast, and so is the pace of deterioration in the religion of Islam. The situation demands a strong, quick and determined effort by one and all for arresting the rot and stopping further degeneration of the Muslim society.

As a rule, existence of true Islam depends entirely upon the perseverance and collective effort of its followers. Unfortunately, they seem to be deficient in these very requirements. We must appreciate that the "Quran" and "Hadis" are full of the lessons in calling the Muslims to be active and to persevere in the path of Allah. There is a "hadis" about a very pious person who may pray night and day all his life, but he cannot come to the level of one who strives and sacrifies his pleasure and comfort for the sake of guiding and helping people to move on the right path of Islam.

On this very point, many commands and injunctions in the "Quran" exist. It is clearly brought out that the one who strives hard in the path of Allah Ta'ala remains superior and exalted compared to all other; for example:

لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ ، فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً ، وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَى ، وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ، دَرَجَاتٍ مِّنْهُ وَمَغْفِرَةً وَرَحْمَةً ، وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا . (النساء ٩٥)

"The believers who, without a reasonable excuse, sit at home, cannot equal those who perform "jehad" in the path of Allah with their lives and wealth. Allah has raised the status of those who perform "jehad" with their lives and wealth as compared to those who stay at home. To the former, He has promised a blessed abode; Allah has exalted the "Mujahideen" over those who stay at home, with glorious reward: pompous ranks, His mercy and forgiveness; and Allah is Forgiving and Merciful."

Although the above verse refers to "jehad" (holy war) against the infidels and unbelievers in order to uphold the teachings of Islam and subdue and subjugate faithlessness

and "shirk" and, although we are unfortunate in not having the opportunity of fulfilling that sublime task, we ought not to throw away any chance of doing something, howsoever small, in the direction of propagating the truth. Only then can we expect that one day our humble efforts and insignificant perseverance may gather momentum and impetus for bigger and higher performances.

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا (العنكبوت ٦٩)

Undoubtedly Allah Ta'ala has promised to provide protection for the way of life propagated by Hadhrat Mohammad (sallallaho alaihe wasallam). But, human effort and perseverance have been defined as the only media for its promotion and advancement. The Companions of the Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) strove untiringly for that purpose and, assuredly, they succeeded and were the recipients of high rewards. They had the honour of receiving Divine help and assistance. We, being their admirers and believers, ought to try and follow them and prepare ourselves for the propagation of the "Kalimah" and the message of Allah Ta'ala. Thus, we will also be favoured with Divine help and assistance:

إِنْ تَنْصُرُوا اللَّهَ يَنْصُرْكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَكُمْ (محمد ٧)

"If you (come forward to) help the religion of Allah Ta'ala, He shall help you and make you steadfast."

FOURTH

Most of us think that, as we ourselves do not possess the essential virtues and qualities of Islam, we are not competent to perform the duty of propagation of those qualities among others. This is a clear misunderstanding. Since an obligation has to be fulfilled, particularly when we have been commanded by Allah Ta'ala for that task, there can be no question of denying obedience to it. We must set ourselves to work in obedience to Divine command. Our efforts then shall, "Insha Allah", gather greater strength and make us more determined and resolute. In this way, our sustained endeavour on proper lines will one day bring us the great honour of being dear to Allah Ta'ala. It is against the convention and the Sunnat of Allah Ta'ala that, if one perseveres and strives for His sake (religion), He would not condescend to bestow favours and kindnesses because the

person was not competent or fit for the task! This point is fully brought out in the following Hadis:

عَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ قُلْنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللّٰهِ لَا نَأْمُرُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَتّٰى نَعْمَلَ بِهِ كُلِّهِ ، وَلَا نَنْهٰى عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ حَتّٰى نَجْتَنِبَهُ كُلَّهُ ، فَقَالَ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: بَلْ مُرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَعْمَلُوا بِهِ كُلِّهِ ، وَانْهَوا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَإِنْ لَّمْ تَجْتَنِبُوهُ كُلَّهُ . (رواه الطبراني في الأوسط)

Hadhrat Anas (radiallaho anho) relates: "We inquired of the Holy Prophet: 'O Prophet of Allah, is it right that we should not enjoin virtue unless we practise all the virtues ourselves, and should not forbid the wrongs unless we ourselves completely abstain from them all? 'Nay,' said the Prophet, 'do enjoin others to practise good deeds even though you do not practise all of them, and do forbid evil actions even though you do not abstain from them all'."

FIFTH

Most of us take it for granted that the religious schools, the "Ulema", the saints who have their seats at various religious places (Khanqah), and the religious books and magazines are sufficient activities for the fulfilment of the mission of "Amr bil ma'ruf wa nahi anil munkar" (Tabligh). These efforts, they think, are enough to meet the requirements of Tabligh. Undoubtedly, the presence of all these is absolutely essential and one must look upon them with reverence and pay attention to their problems, as the traces of Islam that exist today owe their existence to these very institutions, but they are not enough to meet the situation even partially. The task is stupenduous, considering our present weaknesses and the extent of the problem. To be content with the existence of these few means will be a grave folly on our part.

Even to derive full benefit from these institutions, we have to create, within ourselves, a true and a deep respect for the faith of Islam and a burning desire to adopt it in our practical life. Up to fifty years back, people did possess real love, urge and passion for Islam, and there were visible signs and manifestations of Islamic way of life. In those days these institutions could perhaps meet the demand

adequately. But, today all our sentiments and feelings for Islam are practically dead, because of the continuous onslaught on our faith and social structure by various foreign elements and forces. Alas! they have succeeded in their object! As, instead of love, we seem to possess a hidden inferiority complex towards our religion and faith! Obviously, therefore, we must act quickly and wrest the initiative from the hands of opposite forces and launch a strong counter-effort, whereby we are able to revive the dead spirit of each and every Muslim and rekindle in him the love and attachment for Islam. Only then can we derive full benefit from the existing religious institutions which, in turn, can serve the community in a befitting manner. Unless such steps are taken vigorously, the present state of complacency will spread deep and wide, and instead of these institutions, which are doing good in this limited way, may meet the fate of total extinction.

SIXTH

There is a great misunderstanding that, whenever one takes up the work of enjoining good and forbidding evil, he is not received well by the people. The people invariably treat him badly, using harsh and insulting language. Also, that sometimes people tend to adopt a mean and contemptuous attitude towards religious workers. This is true, but we are apt to forget the fact that the performance of the act of propagation means simply to follow in the footsteps of the Prophets of Allah Ta'ala, who were always the victims of the worst type of treatment. That is the usual and destined disposition of those who take to this mission! Indeed, all Prophets had to suffer untold miseries on account of this, as is clear from the following verse:

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِي شِيَعِ الْأَوَّلِينَ ، وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِؤُنَ . (الحجر ١٠)

"And We sent down Prophets before you amongst people gone by, and no Prophet came to them but that they ridiculed him."

The Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) once remarked:

"No Prophet has suffered more than me in the propagation of truth."

It is obvious therefore that there is no justification for giving rise to such misunderstanding. As we profess to be the followers of Hadhrat Mohammad (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) who himself had suffered in the performance of this very mission, but took everything cheerfully and with forbearance, we must also follow his sublime examples and show patience and calmness while performing the vital duty of "Tabligh".

SOLUTION

It has been clearly brought out in the preceding pages that the current disease in the body of Muslims has sprung from the extinction of the true spirit of Islam in our hearts. As a result, real sentiments and love for Islam are practically dead in us and our belief in it has dissipated. Obviously, when the very source becomes dry, the channels of virtue, good deeds and fine attributes, which can flow from it, are not to be seen any longer. This is exactly what is evident today. It has been fully discussed and brought out earlier that the only means for the building up of this source, and maintining a constantly proper flow of religious benefits from it, is the act of "Tabligh", which really and truly is the life-blood of Islam. Unless we are able to revive it, we cannot achieve anything in this life because no nation or people can rise to glory without having in them the high human attributes and character which only the religion of Islam can give.

We should now clearly feel the disease from which we suffer and judge the treatment which can bring the remedy. It is now up to us to set about the revival of the obligatory task of "Tabligh". It will be only then that we can hope to regenerate the true faith of Islam in the masses. By this means alone can we recognise and truly understand both Allah Ta'ala and His Holy Prophet, Hadhrat Mohammad (sallallaho alaihe wasallam), and will be able to clearly understand and finally submit to their commands and wishes. To achieve all this, we will have to adopt the exact methods and ways which are laid down and were demonstrated by the Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) himself when he reformed the pagan Arabs. Allah Ta'ala says in the Quran:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللّٰهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ (الأحزاب ٢١)

"Indeed the Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) is the perfect example for you to follow."

In this very connection, Hadhrat Imam Malik (rahmatullah alaihi) said:

لَنْ يُصْلِحَ آخِرَ هٰذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ إِلَّا مَا أَصْلَحَ أَوَّلَهَا

Reformation of the last (part) of this (Mohammad's) Ummat will not be possible except by adopting the method which was used in the beginning (by Hadhrat Mohammad sallallaho alaihe wasallam).

In the beginning, when the Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) had started to call the people to Islam, he did not have a single supporter behind him nor had he any political power or possessions. The Pagan Arabs were arrogantly independent and self-opinionated. No one among them was prepared to listen to reason or truth or obey another person. They strongly disliked and were deadly opposed to the "Kalimah-tul-Haq", which the Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) had the sole mission to teach. In these circumstances, one wonders what gave such invisible power and force to that one single man, who was wordly poor and without any means, that he eventually was able to draw the whole of the Arab nation towards him. First we ought to carefully think and see what was it towards which he beckoned the people; initially they refused, but came running towards him as soon as they perceived the light, and stood by him so close that they never left him again. It was the message of Eternal Truth to which he called!–that and only that (Truth), which was the Holy Prophet's (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) sole mission and aim in life–and which he so beautifully presented to the people! It is:

أَنْ لَا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللّٰهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِّنْ دُونِ اللّٰهِ . (آل عمران ٦٤)

"That we worship nothing but Allah, and associate none with Him as His compeer or rival, and none of us considers another god except Allah."

The propagation of that same very truth can bring the very same results again.

The Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) forbade his followers from looking upon any 'Being' except Allah

Ta'ala for worship or obedience. Not only did he succeed in achieving his aim, but was able to cut all ties between his followers and every alien element, and bound his people in one uniform system of life from which they never tried to break away again. They really became the picture of:

اتَّبِعُوا مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُم مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا مِن دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ (الأعراف ٣)

"Follow that which has been sent to you from the Sustainer, and do not follow others (considering them) as Protectors except Allah Ta'ala."

This was the real lesson, which the Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) had been commanded (by Allah Ta'ala) to teach and spread. It is further clear from the following verse:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُم بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ، إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن ضَلَّ عَن سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ . (النحل ١٢٥)

"O Muhammad! invite people to your Lord with wisdom and better counsel, and argue with them in such wise as is best; verily your Lord knows the one who wanders astray from His path, and He knows those who are on the right path."

The highway marked for the progress of the Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) and his followers is further declared in the following verses:

قُلْ هَذِهِ سَبِيلِي أَدْعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ عَلَى بَصِيرَةٍ أَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِي وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ . (يوسف ١٠٨)

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّن دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنَّنِي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ . (حم السجدة ٣٣)

"O Muhammad! say, this is my path, and I invite you towards Allah Ta'ala knowingly, I and my followers too: and Allah is all pure and never will I join partners with Allah."

"And who is better in speech than one who invites you towards Allah Ta'ala, does good deeds and says, verily, I am of those who submit their will to Allah."

To call mankind to Allah Ta'ala and show the right path to all those who had gone astray was the only mission and the sole purpose of the Holy Prophet's (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) life. To serve this very purpose, thousands of prophets had been deputed before him. As Allah Ta'ala says:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ . (الأنبياء ٢٥)

"And We did not send any Prophet before you, but that We revealed upon him that verily there is no god but Me and so worship Me."

The sacred biography of Hadhrat Mohammad (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) and also those of other Prophets indicate one single aim as the sole mission of their lives: i.e., to believe in One True Allah Ta'ala and His one Divine Personality and His Attributes. This belief is the essence of the faith of Islam. It was to practise and demonstrate this very faith that man has been sent on this earth, as will be seen from this verse:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ (الذاريات ٥٦)

"And We have not created the genii and human beings but to worship Me only."

We should by now ought to be able to understand the real purpose for the creation of man and the way we, particularly Muslims, should live; we also know the true disease from which we suffer and its treatment; it should, therefore, not be difficult then to find out how to apply that treatment and regain our lost vitality. If we bear in our mind all that has been discussed so far, and with that background act sincerely, any method adopted will "Insha Allah" prove to be beneficial and successful. However, a proven successful method is described.

COURSE OF ACTION

With the very limited knowledge and understanding that I have about such a vital matter as "Tabligh" (enjoining good and forbidding evil), a scheme of work and action is described below, for the improvement of Muslims and their progress in Islam. Actually, what I have to say is nothing else than a brief outline of the practical way of life which had been followed by our ancestors and early Muslims.

The FIRST and the FOREMOST thing to do is to change the aim of our life, from material motives and acquisition of wealth, to the propagation and spreading of Allah Ta'ala's "Kalimah" and Islam; to fix as a definite objective for ourselves, the enforcement of the commands and orders of Allah Ta'ala; and to sincerely resolve: I will obey every command of Allah Ta'ala, shall try to practise it in my daily life and will not disobey Allah Ta'ala in any circumstances. The fulfilment of this resolution must be made the main aim of life. We can plan and act on this broad base by adopting the following practical scheme and procedure:

(1) To memorise and correctly recite the "Kalimah":

لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ

And to understand its literal meaning, as well as what it actually implies.

That is, to believe, to say, and to act on the faith that Allah Ta'ala is the only Power, the only Authority and the Sole Controller of all things, and it is He alone who is to be worshipped and obeyed, and it is He alone who grants success or failure in life. Success will depend on our truly adopting the way of life preached and taught by Hadhrat Mohammad (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) and our accepting him as true and last Prophet of Allah.

Having this as ideal, we begin to change our own life on the pattern requirements of the "Kalimah".

(2) To become punctual and regular in offering our prayers (*namaz*) five times a day. The performance of this most obligatory duty ought to be strictly in accordance with the procedure laid down by Hadhrat Mohammad (sallallaho alaihe wasallam), to be performed in utmost humility and supplication. The greatness and superiority of Allah Ta'ala must be held uppermost in mind throughout the prayers, whilst maintaining the feelings of one's own humbleness and helplessness. In other words, "namaz" should be performed as if one was actually being presented to Allah Ta'ala in a manner befitting the Height of His Greatness and Glory. If the procedure of "namaz" is not known, it ought to be learnt properly with each detail committed to memory.

(3) To develop attachment of body and soul to the *Holy Quran* in the following manner:

(a) To recite daily a portion of the Quran, however small, with highest respect and reverence for the holy scripture and by understanding its meaning, if possible. If one is unable to understand the meaning, he may still recite the text with the purpose and hope that his salvation and progress depends on it. Simple recitation of the original words and lines is also a great blessing. If a person is unable to read, he ought to spend a litle time daily to learn to read.

(b) To ensure that one's own children as well as those of the neighbours and friends are taught the Holy Quran and other essential religious books as a first step in their learning.

(4) Some time should be devoted each day to *zikr*, which means concentrating on the Omnipotence, the Greatness, and the Attributes of Allah Ta'ala, and to offer DUROOD [prayers] for the Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam). In this connection, guidance should be sought from a "Sheikh-e-Tariqat" (a learned and saintly person), who should be carefully selected for his distinction in piety and his capacity to follow "Shariat" and "Sunnah". He may prescribe certain "Wazaif" (special verses) to be recited during the times of "Zikr". In case no such holy person can be contacted, it is suggested that the following "Wazaif" may be repeated a hundred times (one tasbih of 100 beads) each, both in the morning and in the evening:

(a) *Third Kalimah,*

سُبْحَانَ اللهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّهِ وَلَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَاللهُ أَكْبَرُ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ .

(b) *Durood* (praying blessings for the prophet).

(c) *Istighfar* (seeking forgiveness of Allah).

(5) Every Muslim must be considered as one's real brother and must always be given affection, sympathy and sincere attention at all times, particularly when he is in need. The fact that a person professes the faith of Islam automatically entitles him to brotherly respect and reverence from all Muslims, who must at all times refrain from causing him any physical or mental harm.

The above practices should be strictly enforced in one's own life and, at the same time, efforts should be made so that other people may follow them as well. The only and the best way to achieve this is to devote some time specially for learning and inculcating in oneself these fine Islamic qualities, and also persuading others to make similar efforts. Thus a joint and collective campaign will automatically ensure for the growth and expansion of Islam in its true form, which is the real and urgent need of the day.

It was exactly this type of work, which every Prophet of Allah Ta'ala had to do as his sole occupation. For the sake of this work, almost all Prophets had to bear untold miseries and perils. The worthy Companions of Hadhrat Mohammad (sallallaho alaihe wasallam), as well as many other distinguished Muslims of the early period of Islam, spent the whole of their lives in striving hard and struggling for the religion of Islam in this very manner. Most of them sacrificed their lives in the sacred path of Allah Ta'ala. It will be our misfortune and enormous loss if we do not devote a part of our lifetime, however small a period it may be, towards propagating and perpetuating Islam. We must confess that it is due to our negligence in this vital task that the Muslim society has reached its present state of low morale and virtual collapse and, therefore, we must rise and make manifold efforts.

Previously, the very purpose of being a Muslim was to be ready to lay down one's life, honour and wealth for upholding Islam and the *Kalimah*. In those days, if anyone did not do that, he was considered to be ignorant and a useless fellow. But alas! today, although we feel proud to be called Muslims, we remain totally unmoved by the fact that every particle of Islam is being destroyed one by one before our very eyes, and not a finger is moved to check this terrible loss. If we realise this we can appreciate that the propagation of Islam is our real mission in life, and therein lies our very existence as Muslims and also our success, glory and ultimate salvation. The opposite is also true that by neglecting this important task we suffer from moral degeneration and social degradation. The only remedy for this is that all of us must sincerely repent our lethargic and injurious past and take immediate steps to revive the act of *Tabligh* as our major occupation. It is only then that we can expect the mercy and compassion of Allah Ta'ala to flow, to bring us triumph and happiness both in this life and the hereafter.

This does not mean that we should give up everything else, i.e., our profession–trade or employment and take entirely to this work. It really means that, as we devote our whole-hearted attention and time to other material vocations, we should also attend to this work. As and when some persons find themselves ready to take up this sacred task, they should try to contact their friends or such persons in their neighbourhood who may already be engaged in this work and spend a few hours a week in their company. The next step will be to spend, under the guidance of those people, full three days every month outside in a locality or a village other than one's own. Later, but as early as possible, to pass one full month, or better still, forty days annually in some distant area in similar manner. Lastly, the real requirement in "Tabligh" is to spend continuously four months once in the lifetime, in a given place or area. All these periods are to be spent entirely in the pursuit of learning and propagation of the true faith of Islam and adopting the actual way of life under the Sacred code of "Shariat". Thus our efforts will become extensive and ultimately reach every person, rich and poor, employer and employee, Land-Lord and Peasant, learned and ignorant, to join hands in this work and become bound in the ties of true Islam as ordained by Allah Ta'ala and the Holy Prophet Mohammad (sallallaho alaihe wasallam).

PROCEDURE TO WORK

The most important factor in the task of Tabligh is the manner and the method of approach, which simply means to follow closely the lines adopted by the worthy Companions of the Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) strictly in accordance with his teachings and practices. The method adopted by the Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) was as follows:

A jamaat or group of at least ten men should be formed. One of them should be selected "amir" (leader). They should get together in a mosque, make ablutions and offer two *rakaat 'nafil' prayers. After this, all should supplicate together and beseech for Divine mercy, help and guidance for success in their efforts and remaining steadfast and resolute in their task of Tabligh. For all this time, "zikr" should be recited by all, and every precaution should be taken not to indulge in idle talk. On reaching the place for "Tabligh", once again the "jamaat" should supplicate and beseech for Allah Ta'ala's mercy and help in their mission. The place of Tabligh will be the vicinity of a mosque of the locality where the work is to be conducted. A part of the "jamaat" should be detailed to tour the locality calmly, and quietly inviting people to the mosque, where "ta'leem, (reading and teaching out of religious books) should be in progress and later the "namaz" (prayers) of the time should be offered. After this, one of the members of the "jamaat" should place before the people, in an affectionate and calm manner, the importance and urgency of reviving Islam in each and every Muslim as ordained by Allah Ta'ala and the Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam), giving out as simply as possible the cardinal points of Tabligh and the way to accomplish them. Finally, the people should be persuaded, again in a cordial manner, to join hands in this sacred task and come out to do the work of Tabligh like the Jamaat itself.

Later, some members of the "jamaat" may accompany the people to their homes, where the womenfolk should also be addressed and persuaded to do similar duty among women.

* In formal prayers, a rakaat means one complete action comprising standing, kneeling and bowing by placing the forehead on the ground, two "rakaat" means two such actions.

They should be told to be regular in their daily prayers. All this should be done without entering the private portion of any house. The women should also be told to strictly follow the cardinal points of "Tabligh" in their daily life and observe "pardah" in accordance with the "Shriat".

After this, all such people who may be prepared to join the work should be organized into a separate "jamaat", with and "amir" from among themselves. They should first be made to work under the guidance of the members of the original "jamaat". The important point to be remembered at this stage is that every person engaged on "Tabligh" must fully obey his "amir" and the latter, in turn, should ensure that his personal services and attention are available to each and every member of his Jamaat. He must see to every person's welfare, comforts and morale and, before taking any decision, he must consult all his colleagues. The following general principles of the work of "Tabligh" should be carefully noted at all times.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

In its real form and sense, "Tabligh" is the most important type of worship of Allah Ta'ala and it amounts to a blessing of very high order. It literally means to follow in the footsteps of the Prophets. Truly, as the work is of a very superior character, it must be based on equally high principles, which ought to be strictly followed throughout. Each participant must feel that it is he who needs to improve himself rather than thinking of reforming others. During the course of work and, even away from it, he must try to behave as a perfect Muslim, as a faithful slave of Allah Ta'ala, constantly obeying and following the Divine commands of "Shariat" and always seeking Allah Ta'ala's mercy and pleasure. This is the basic requirement and the soul and foundation of the work of "Tabligh". Once it is deeply and firmly embedded in the hearts of workers, the other principles, rules and practices, some of which are narrated below, will become easy to follow:

(1) As far as possible, all expenses, including travelling, food etc., must be borne by each individual himself and, if he can afford, he may quietly assist those companions who may be in need.

(2) All fellow workers and companions in this work must be given full respect, shown tolerance, be cared for and encouraged at all times by one another. Such participation will prove a great blessing for the whole area where the "jamaat" may be working.

(3) Conversations, talks and discussions must be conducted in soft and persuasive tones, using simple and polite language. All types of displeasure with each other must be avoided. The "ulema-e-karam" (scholars of Muslim scripture) must be held in high respect and esteem as we usually display for the "Holy Quran" and "Hadis", because, it is through these learned personages that Allah Ta'ala has blessed us with the true knowledge of Islam and enlightenment. Any disrespect towards them, however insignificant, may amount to contempt of Islam itself, which in turn may provoke the wrath of Allah Ta'ala for the whole community.

(4) Leisure and free moments must be spent either in reading good religious books or in the company of pious and learned companions; by this means one will be able to learn many right things about the faith of Islam, about Allah Ta'ala and His apostle. Particular care must be taken of the time given to the "Tabligh" work itself, that nothing unimportant, useless or senseless is uttered, discussed or done.

(5) To endeavour to earn an honest and pure living, to be most careful and frugal in expenditure, and to constantly observe every single obligation, however big or small, towards one's family, relations and acquaintances.

(6) No controversial matters or points of secondary importance be discussed at any time. The total time must be devoted to bringing out the Divinity, Oneness and Omnipotence of Allah Ta'ala and to confine all talk to the main points of "Tabligh", which are in real sense the basic principles to be followed by each and every Muslim at all times.

(7) Every action, work and speech must be fused with sincerity and honesty of purpose, for an act, however small, but imbued with this quality is destined to bring high rewards and plenty of well-being. On the other hand, an insincere act, however big, will not bear any worthwhile fruit or benefit, either in this life or in the hereafter. Hadh-

rat Mu'az (Radi Allaho anho), who was appointed as Governor of Yemen, begged the Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) to give him some special advice. The Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) was pleased to say, "Be meticulously honest and sincere in matters of religion: a little done with sincerity is enough". There is yet another "Hadis" in the same connection, "Allah Ta'ala accepts only such actions and deeds which are performed purely for His pleasure and accord". In another place it is mentioned "Allah Ta'ala does not look at your face nor at your property, but only at your hearts and deeds". So the crux of the matter is that the work of "Tabligh" must be performed with all sincerity and honesty. No show or outward appearance is to be put on. The degree of success and progress will depend entirely on the depth of our sincerity.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A brief sketch of the work of "Tabligh", its importance and urgent need have been discussed. It now remains to be judged as to how all this can guide us and bring us the desired relief and benefits in these times, which are fraught with confusion, unrest and rivalries.

For this, once again, we have to seek guidance from the allwise "Holy Quran", which refers to the hard work and endurance for the faith of Islam as a highly profitable business, and puts it across in the following manner:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَى تِجَارَةٍ تُنجِيكُم مِّنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ، تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنفُسِكُمْ ، ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ، يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ جَنَّتٍ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ، وَمَسَاكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّتِ عَدْنٍ ، ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ، وَأُخْرَى تُحِبُّونَهَا نَصْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ ، وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ . (الصف ١٠ - ١٣)

"O you who believe! shall I point out to you a trade that will shield you from a grievous doom? Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and perform "jehad" in His way with your wealth and lives. This is best for you, if you understand. Your Lord will forgive your sins, and you shall enter Paradise, under which ripple (beauteous) streams, and stately abodes in everlasting gardens; and this is great success . . .

And another which you covet much, i.e., succour from Allah and victory near at hand; and give glad tidings to those who believe."

The above verse describes a trade, which if accepted promises deliverance from all types of afflictions and punishments. The trade is meant: to have a firm faith in Allah Ta'ala and His Apostle and to struggle hard in the path of Allah, without shirking to use one's life and wealth. This again points to the act of "Tabligh", which can ensure for us everlasting well-being and happiness. It is this simple work which will bring us great benefits, such as the forgiveness for all our sins, deliberate mistakes and shortcomings and high rewards in the life hereafter. So much for the success in the next life, which really is the greatest

triumph for a Muslim, but there is also clear hint for this life too. We shall get what we cherish most, such as prosperity, divine help and success against all our adversaries!

In other words, Allah Ta'ala has demanded two things from us, firstly to have firm faith in Him and His Apostle, secondly, to struggle hard in His path, giving, if need be, our lives and all that we possess. In return for this, He has also promised two things: first a beautiful and peaceful abode in Heaven (Jannat) with an eternal life, and everlasting happiness: and second, glory and success in this life. The first demand on us is that of faith (eiman). This is exactly what the "Tabligh" is meant to bring to us, that we should all be endowed with the wealth of true faith. The second demand is that of striving in the path of Allah, which actually means "jehad". Jehad may normally mean fighting a war against oppressors and non-believers. In the practical sense, however, it means spreading of Kalimah of Allah and enforcing of Allah's Commandments, which is also the ultimate aim of "Tabligh".

It should be clear to us now that the happiness and success in the life after death is solely dependent on having firm faith in Allah Ta'ala and His Apostle, and in striving hard in the path laid down by Him. Similarly, the success and prosperity in this life too depend entirely on that very faith and on spending all our efforts in the path of Allah Ta'ala.

When we fulfil these basic requirements, firstly of faith in Allah Ta'ala and His Apostle, and secondly of struggling hard in their path, through these two attributes alone, we can adorn ourselves with high moral virtues and excellence of character. Only then can we fit to receive the promised vicegerency of Allah Ta'ala and His kingdom on earth, which are bound to come as is promised in the Holy Quran:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ ، وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُم مِّن بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا ، يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا . (النور ٥٥)

"To those of you who believe and do righteous deeds, Allah promises that He will certainly give dominance

to them in this world as He gave to those before you; and the religion that has been chosen for them shall be strengthened for them, and He will thereafter certainly transform their fear into tranquillity, provided they worship Me and associate none with Me."

The above verse portrays a forthright promise of kingdom, but through "eiman" (firm faith) and righteous deeds. This was actually fulfilled in the days of the Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) and remained in effect right through the period on the "Khulfa-e-Rashidin" (the first four Caliphs after the Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam). Practically the whole of Arabia had become an Islamic State in the days of the Holy Prophet (sallallaho alaihe wasallam) himself and the rest of the countries (Muslim countries of today) mostly joined Islam during the period of "Khulfa-e-Rashdin" or immediately after their time. Later on too, the promise continued to be fulfilled in favour of a number of Muslim kings and "Khalifas" and it still awaits materialisation if someone fulfils the conditions, as is clear from the next verse:

فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللّٰهِ هُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ (المائدة ٥٦)

"Surely Allahs followers shall dominate"

In these few pages, an analysis of the present situation and a practical solution for improving it has been given; in fact the solution is nothing else than the actual Islamic way of life, which belonged to our forefathers and early Muslims.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be said that there is no way to gain honour, happiness, peace and tranquillity in this life other than to adopt and firmly hold on to the work and system of "Tabligh", for which everyone of us must use all his energies and wealth.

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللّٰهِ جَمِيعًا وَّلَا تَفَرَّقُوا (آل عمران ١٠٣)

"Hold fast to the rope of Allah and do not create dissensions."

FINAL APPEAL

This very system has actually been put into practice, in the recent past, in the territory of Mewat (an area of Alwar

State) and a few other districts around Delhi (India). The work in that region, has not yet reached the final stage; the progress of the local Muslims, however, has been quite marked. The blessing and benefits of the system of "Tabligh" are clearly visible and worth witnessing. If all Muslims collectively resolve to follow the noble example mentioned above and adopt the correct system of life, as described in this book, there is every hope that, through that effort, Allah Ta'ala may obviate all our miseries and adversities and we may be able to regain our faith, the power to do righteous deeds and the resultant honour, dignity and glory in this life and attain permanent salvation in the next. The Muslims can then set an example for the rest of the World to live in peace, tranquillity and happiness, which is the natural desire of every man on earth.

An attempt has been made to explain as early as possible the real purpose behind the writing of this book, which is to present to the readers the sketch of a practical way of life, which about thirty years ago had been initiated and vigorously followed by Hadhrat Maulana Mohammad Ilyas Sahib, "rahmatullah alaih". He had in fact dedicated all his life for this sacred purpose and mission. It is up to us, the Muslims of the present time, to understand our obligations towards Islam and fulfil them in our own interest and that of the coming generations and the mankind at large. The way is clear and well set. Let us begin the march and fix our minds on the final goal, which is to acquire the pleasure and approval of Allah Ta'ala.

میری قسمت سے الٰہی پائیں یہ رنگ قبول
پھول کچھ میں نے چنے ہیں انکے دامن کیلئے

وَآخِرُ دَعْوَانَا اَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ، وَالصَّلٰوةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِهٖ مُحَمَّدٍ
وَّآلِهٖ وَاَصْحَابِهٖ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ، بِرَحْمَتِهٖ يَا اَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِيْنَ

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